

SOME NOTES ON THE LETTERS OF GREGORY AKINDYNOS

ANGELA CONSTANTINIDES HERO

Like other disputes, the Hesychast controversy cannot be fully studied and evaluated until all information concerning the contending parties has come to light. Undoubtedly in a doctrinal dispute such as this, scholarly interest focuses on the theological writings. But the historian studying the cultural and socio-political aspects of this multifaceted religious crisis of the mid-fourteenth century must turn to the surviving letters of the Palamites and their opponents as to an indispensable source.¹

In the Hesychast controversy Akindynos played the part of a protagonist. Without him there might have been no controversy. For after the return to Italy of the instigator of the dispute, the Calabrian monk Barlaam, it was Akindynos who carried on the battle against Palamas and became the principal spokesman of the anti-Palamite faction. His correspondence, therefore, constitutes an essential document for the study of the evolution of the conflict. It consists of seventy-six letters, the majority of which trace the change of Akindynos from a well-meaning mediator between Palamas and Barlaam to uncompromising opponent of Palamas, his former master and spiritual father. Since they dwell heavily on the dispute, these letters offer little in the way of biographical information, but even the few scraps they provide are valuable, considering the dearth of source material which plagues the biographer of a condemned heretic like Akindynos. Their prosopographical value, on the other hand, is more substantial for they add interesting touches to the portraits of several well-known contemporary figures and also introduce some new personalities.²

¹ With the exception of certain modifications and additions, this article is substantially the same as the communication read at the XVth International Congress of Byzantine Studies held at Athens, in September 1976.

² His correspondents include Barlaam; Palamas; Gregoras; Nicholas Kabasilas; the *megas doux* Apokaukos; the imperial sec-

Even prior to the current rise of interest in Hesychasm, the letters of Akindynos attracted the attention of Byzantinists, thirty-two of them having already been published by various scholars.³ Prof-

retary Kinnamos; Patriarch Kalekas; the metropolitans Makarios of Philadelphia, Iakobos of Monemvasia, and Hyakinthos of Corinth; the scholar monks David Dishypatos, Matthew Blastares, Athanasios, the imperial emissary to Stephen Dushan, Hierotheos, Ignatios, and Tzakonopoulos; the scholars John Gabras and George Lapithes; the young intellectual Styppes; the philologist Thomas Magistros and his fellow Thessalonians, the archdeacon Bryennios, the landowner Isaris, and the Branas brothers; the *protonotarios* Kaballaropoulos; the influential civil dignitary Sabbas Logaras; and Maximos Kalopheros, the later convert to Catholicism. There are also several persons whose names figure in the letters, such as the metropolitan Hyakinthos of Thessalonica and his fellow Cypriotes, Bartholomaios, Blasios, and the erudite Leo; the monks Senacherim and Makrenos; the young nobleman Atouemes; the Thessalonian anti-Palamite Chabaron; the civil official Charatzas and the equally fanatic Palamite, the crippled monk Mark Kyrtos; the undecided Tricanas, abbot of the Athonite Lavra; the hetaeriarch Andronikos Tzimisikes to whom Akindynos had given grammar lessons in Berroia; the scribes Euphemianos and Manasses; and finally Akindynos' fierce persecutor, the hesychast Menas.

³ The previous editions of Akindynos' correspondence are discussed in the introduction to my edition of the letters of Akindynos which is being published by Dumbarton Oaks. The following is just a list of these editions in chronological sequence: Two letters to Gregoras, ed. L. Schopen and E. Bekker, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, Bonn (1829), vol. 1, pp. LXIX-LXX and LXXXVI-LXXXVIII (= PG, 148, cols. 68D-70A and 84C-86D); four letters, ed. Th. Uspenskij, *Sinodik v nedelju provoslavija* (Odessa, 1893), 75-84; Letter to Kabasilas, ed. I. Ševčenko, "Nicolaus Cabasilas' Correspondence and the Treatment of Late Byzantine Literary Texts," *BZ*, 47 (1954), 53 note 4; nine letters, ed. R. J. Loenertz, "Gregorii Akindyni Epistulae selectae IX. Ex codice Veneto Marciano 155," *Επ. Έτ.Βυζ.Σπ.*, 27 (1957) (hereafter, Loenertz, *Epistulae*), 89-109; Letter to David Dishypatos, ed. V. Laurent, "L'assaut avorté de la Horde d'Or contre l'empire byzantin (printemps-été, 1341)," *REB*, 18 (1960), 157-60; Letter to the Metropolitan of Corinth, ed. A. Vassilikopoulou-Ioannidou, *Ανέκδοτος έπιστολή του Γρηγορίου Ακινδύνου προς τον μητροπολίτην Κορίνθου 'Υάκινθον, Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Πελοποννησιακών Σπουδών* (Athens, 1976), II, 91-97; one letter to Gregoras and a large part of another letter addressed to the same, ed. H.-V. Beyer, *Nikephoros Gregoras. Antirrhētika I*, WByzSt, 12 (Vienna, 1976), 108-9 and note 620; seventeen letters, ed. A. Karpozilos, "Seventeen Letters of Gregorios Akindynos (*cod. Mon. gr. 223*)," *OCA*, 204 (1977) (here-

iting substantially from the work of the earlier editors, especially that of the late Fr. R. J. Loenertz, I have completed a critical edition of the correspondence of Akindynos and would like to comment here briefly on the results of my research.⁴

THE SCORIALENSIS MS

Of the six MSS which have preserved letters of Akindynos the codex *Scorialensis graecus* Φ -III-11 must be singled out, primarily because the four letters which it transmits anonymously are autograph, and also because some of its other contents indicate that it may have come from the anti-Palamite milieu.⁵ For, in addition to Akindynos' letters, this MS contains the correspondence of his

staunchest supporter, the royal nun Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, with her spiritual director, as well as an anonymous letter by an unidentified friend of Kyparissiotēs. According to internal evidence, this letter is addressed to Matthew Kantakouzenos in the Peloponnese and refers to the long friendship which linked the eldest son of John VI with John Kyparissiotēs the prominent anti-Palamite.⁶ The *Scorialensis* may also prove interesting to philologists because the collection of excerpts that it contains from John Lydos' *De mensibus*, Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*, and Plutarch's *Moralia* and *Parallel Lives* may derive from Maximos Planoudēs whose interest in these authors is well known.⁷

THE FIRST CONDEMNATION OF AKINDYNOS

Turning now to questions of historical import, I wish to comment on a matter bearing on Akindynos' first condemnation. It has been thought that Akindynos was anonymously condemned at the council of July 1341 because he signed a statement of submission formally renouncing the doctrines of Barlaam.⁸ The evidence adduced is from Palamas' *Sixth Antirrhetic* against Akindynos where in fact such a document is mentioned. However, a careful reading of the pertinent passage reveals that the author does not refer here to the first condemnation of Akindynos but to the events which fol-

after, ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*), 65–117; Letter to the Metropolitan of Philadelphia, ed. G. Passarelli, *Macario Crisocephalo (1300–1382)*, OCA, 210 (1980), 32 note 28. To the above editors of Akindynos' correspondence must be added the name of E. Tsolakes who in 1964 published the last of Akindynos' letters to Gregoras but argued that this letter was not written by Akindynos but by someone in his entourage; cf. 'Ο Γεώργιος Λατίτης καὶ ἡ ἡσυχαστικὴ ἐριδία, *Ἑλληνικά*, 18 (1964), 84–96. Following R. Guiland (*Correspondance de Nicéphore Grégoras; texte édité et traduit par R. Guiland* [Paris, 1927], 282 note 8), Tsolakes questions the authorship of this letter because the author makes use of the third person in reference to himself throughout the letter and because at the very end he appears to distinguish himself from Akindynos when he says in the first person plural that "not only Akindynos, but all we Christians . . . rightly turn away from (Palamas)" (Διόπερ αὐτὸν οὐ μόνος Ἀκίνδυνος, ἀλλὰ πάντες Χριστιανοὶ . . . εἰκότως ἀποστρεφόμεθα). I do not find Tsolakes' argument sufficiently persuasive and in the introduction to my edition I have cited—among other reasons for assigning this letter to Akindynos—an example from Palamas' refutation of the Patriarch of Antioch where he, too, alternates between the third person singular and the first person plural in writing about himself; see 'Αναίρεσις γράμματος Ἰγνατίου, ed. S. Pseutongas, in P. Chrestou et al., *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ Συγγραμματα* (Thessalonica, 1962–70) (hereafter, *Συγγραμματα*), vol. 2, 640^{6–30}.

⁴The project of editing and translating the letters of Akindynos was suggested to me by Fr. John Meyendorff to whom I am deeply grateful for lightening my task by giving generously of his time and advice.

⁵The other five MSS are: *Marcianus graecus* 155 (51 letters); *Monacensis graecus* 223 (17 letters, two of which are also in *Marc.* 155); *Ambrosianus graecus* 290 (*E* 64 sup.) (4 letters); *Vaticanus graecus* 1086 (3 letters, one of which is also in *Marc.* 155); and *Vaticanus graecus* 1122 (1 letter, also found in *Marc.* 155). The letters in the Escorial MS were described as autograph both by Laurent ("La direction spirituelle à Byzance: La correspondance d'Irène-Eulogie Choumnaina Paléologine avec son second directeur," *REB*, 14 [1956], 51) and by Loenertz; see "Dix-huit lettres de Grégoire Acindyne analysées et datées," *OCP*, 23 (1957), 114 (reprinted in *Byzantina et Francograeca* [Rome, 1970], 81). The text is indeed by a fourteenth-century hand and shows several erasures, long deletions and additions attributable to the same hand. The watermark (fols. 232 and 234: "écu écartelé en sautoir," C. M. Briquet, *Les filigranes. Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* [Paris, 1907], no. 890; V. Mošin-S. Tralić, *Les filigranes des XIII^e et XIV^e SS* [Zagreb, 1957], no. 524; dates 1324–1327) confirms the attribution of the letters to the fourteenth century.

⁶The correspondence of Choumnaina (fols. 235^v–245^v) is also preserved anonymously. It was identified by Laurent who believed, however, that the presence in the same volume of the letters of Akindynos and his royal patroness was coincidental; see *op. cit.*, (note 5 *supra*), 52. I am at present preparing an edition of this correspondence. For my forthcoming edition and translation of the letter of Kyparissiotēs' friend, see "An Unknown Letter to Matthew Kantakouzenos," *Okeanos* (Festschrift Ihor Ševčenko), *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 7 (1983).

⁷For a description of the *Scorialensis* and its contents, see G. de Andrés, *Catálogo des los códices griegos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, 2 (Madrid, 1965), 60–64. I have studied this MS by means of photographic reproduction and by examination of the original at the Library of the Escorial.

⁸See P. Chrestou, *Συγγραμματα*, vol. 2, (note 3 *supra*), 17; B. Phanourgakes, *Άγνωστα αντιπαλαμικά συγγραμματα τοῦ Γρηγορίου Ἀκινδύνου*, *Κληρονομία*, 4² (1972), 294–95; K. Pitsakes, *Γρηγορίου Ἀκινδύνου ἀνέκδοτη πραγματεία περὶ (Κωνσταντίνου) Ἀρμενοπούλου*, *Ἑπετηρίς Κέντρου Ἑρεῦνης Ἱστορίας Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου*, 19 (1972), 128. J. Meyendorff and G. Weiss also date this document to 1341 but do not attribute the anonymous condemnation of Akindynos to this recantation: J. Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1959) (hereafter, *Meyendorff, Introduction*), 87 note 95; and G. Weiss, *Joannes Kantakouzenos—Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch—in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung im 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 111 note 724. For the correct date of the synod against Akindynos in the summer of 1341, see J. Darrouzès, *Les registres des actes du patriarchat de Constantinople, vol. 1, fasc. V* (Paris, 1977), no. 2213, where valid reasons are cited for assigning this synod to July, not August.

lowed his ordination by Patriarch Kalekas at the end of 1344. Palamas' statement reads as follows:

But, on the other hand, when by flattery as well as bribes he deceived those who look with open mouth for such things and was admitted among those in the holy sanctuary and, having been immediately discovered, he was by written decision unfrocked by the select bishops and was driven, like something polluted, from the precincts of the holy Church by the pious emperors and the magistrates and simply by all the followers of the correct faith—he wrote a declaration, supposedly, of his beliefs. . . . In this very declaration he again states: I also approve of and wholeheartedly accept the council convoked in the presence of our most pious Emperor . . . of blessed memory which refuted and banned all the profane and erroneous sayings of Barlaam about the inaccessible and divine light of the Transfiguration.⁹

The phrase “he was unfrocked” (ἀπεχειροτονεῖτο) leaves no doubt that the document Palamas has in mind was signed after the adverse reaction of the Empress Anne of Savoy and of the *megas doux* Apokaukos to the ordination of Akindynos. The correct understanding of this passage is necessary not only for establishing the facts about Akindynos' first condemnation but also for dating both the *Antirrhetics* of Palamas and the correspondence of Akindynos with the Cypriote scholar George Lapithes.

Contrary to the claim of their editor,¹⁰ the *Antirrhetics* were not all written before the end of 1344 because the *Sixth Antirrhetic*, as already shown, does contain a distinct reference to the events that occurred at the end of that year and even in the spring of 1345. Further, in the same *Antirrhetic* Palamas goes on to say that four months after signing this document in which he vehemently denounced the doctrines of Barlaam, Akindynos wrote to Lapithes that Barlaam had not been guilty of impiety.¹¹

⁹See *Antirrhetic* 6, 2, 4, Συγγράμματα, vol. 3, 381²³–382³: Ἀλλ' αὐτὸς πάλιν ἡνίκα θωπεῖταις ἅμα καὶ δώροις κλέψας τοὺς πρὸς αὐτὰ κεκρηνότητας, τοῖς ἐν τῷ σεπτῷ βήματι συνεξητάσθη καὶ πάραυτα φωραθεῖς παρὰ τῶν ἐκκρίτων ἀρχιερέων ἐγγράφως ἀπεχειροτονεῖτο καὶ παρὰ τῶν εὐσεβῶν βασιλέων καὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει καὶ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἀπλῶς ἀπάντων ὡς τι μύσος τῶν τῆς ἱερᾶς ἐκκλησίας περιβόλων ἠλαύνετο, λίβελλον συγγραψάμενος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τάχα δόξης. . . . ἐπὶ τοῖνυν αὐτοῦ τοῦ λιβέλλου πάλιν φησὶν, “ἀποδεχόμεθα καὶ ἐκ ψυχῆς ἀσπαζόμεθα καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ μακαρίτου . . . βασιλέως ἡμῶν συναθροισθεῖσαν σύνοδον καὶ ἀπελέγξασαν καὶ ἀποπέμψασαν ὅσα τῷ Βαρλαάμ περὶ τοῦ ἀπροσίτου καὶ θείου φωτὸς τῆς μεταμορφώσεως εἰρηται βλασφημίας καὶ κακοδόξως.”

¹⁰See Chrestou, Συγγράμματα, vol. 3, 24.

¹¹*Antirrhetic* 6, 2, 4, Συγγράμματα, vol. 3, 382³–10: Ἀλλ' οὐπω τεττάρων μηνῶν ὅλων παραρρύντων, βιασαμένου μηδενὸς ὅλως, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς ἐρωτήσαντι τῷ Λαπίθῃ, γράφει καθάπερ ἔφην, κατὰ μηδὲν ἐνταῦθα τῶν θείων βλάσφημόν τε καὶ κακοδόξον ἐξελ-

The reference is, of course, to the spring of 1345 and, since such a statement is found in a letter sent to Lapithes at the initiation of their correspondence, we know now that this correspondence, so important for dating other letters of Akindynos, started in the spring of 1345 and not at the beginning of the controversy.¹²

THE LAST NAME OF ST. SABBAS OF VATOPEDI

Furthermore, I would like to note certain details of prosopographical interest. In his *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Fr. Meyendorff tentatively identified the well-known ascetic Sabbas of Vatopedi with Sabbas Logaras, the man whose influence at Court was responsible for the reconciliation of Akindynos with the *megas doux* Apokaukos and the Palace after the persecution which followed his ordination.¹³ However, Fr. Meyendorff has now brought to my attention a document which renders this identification no longer valid. Folios 199^r–205^v of the codex *Marcianus graecus 155* contain an autograph fragment from the *Vita* of Sabbas of Vatopedi written by Philotheos Kokkinos. A superscription by a hand different from that of the text provides the following information: “This quire is from the *Life* of St. Sabbas whose surname was Tziskos.”¹⁴ This evidence, which establishes beyond doubt the last name of St. Sabbas, dispels the

εγγθῆναι τὸν Βαρλαάμ. Akindynos, actually, wrote that as far as matters of dogma were concerned Barlaam was not as guilty as Palamas; see Letter to Lapithes (Letter 46, according to the sequence of my edition), *Marc. 155*, fol. 69^r: “Ὁ γε μὴν Βαρλαάμ ὅτι μὲν ἡμαρτέ τι περὶ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν καὶ θεῖαν νομοθεσίαν καθ' ἣν ἐν ψυχαῖς ἀνάγκη τὴν μακαριωτάτην ἀποτελεῖσθαι ζωὴν . . . πρὸς τῷ νῦν Λατινισμῷ δῆλον· οὐχ ὅσον δὲ Παλαμᾶς περὶ τὰ δόγματα.”

¹²As Weiss observes, the exact dating of the first letter to Lapithes is important for determining at what time the Patriarch changed his attitude toward Palamas and allowed Akindynos to engage openly in polemical activity; see *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 8), 110.

¹³See pp. 106–7 and note 55.

¹⁴Τὸ παρὸν τετράδιον ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ βίου τοῦ ἁγίου Σάββα οὗ τὸ ἐπὶ κλην Τζίσκος (fol. 199^r). The same superscription identifies the text of the *Vita* as an autograph of Philotheos: συνεγράφη δὲ παρὰ τοῦ χρηματίσαντος πατριάρχου Φιλοθέου τοῦ Κοκκίνου· ὅπερ τετράδιον ἐκομίσθη παρὰ τινος τῶν ἐκεῖνου γνωρίμων, ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς βίβλου αὐτοῦ ληφθὲν καὶ ἥτις διὰ τῶν ἐκεῖνου ἐγγραφῆ χειρῶν. The biography of Sabbas makes it clear that he was never an anti-Palamite. According to Philotheos, not only did Sabbas miraculously prophesy the final defeat and expulsion of Akindynos from the Church but he was also Kantakouzenos' first choice for the patriarchal office after the deposition of Kalekas in 1347. It was after Sabbas declined this honor that the Emperor offered the patriarchal throne to Isidore; see *Vita Sabbae*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας, 5 (St.-Petersburg, 1898), 334–35 and 340; Philotheos, *Vita Isidori*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Zapiski de la Faculté historico-philologique de l'Université de St.-Petersbourg*, 76 (1905), 116–17.

doubts about that notable hesychast's loyalty to Palamism which had resulted from his identification with the anti-Palamite Sabbas Logaras.¹⁵

WHO WAS THE ANTI-PALAMITE GABRAS?

Another controversial figure whose identity can be established through the correspondence of Akindynos is John Gabras to whom Palamas wrote one letter and Akindynos two.¹⁶ Palamas addressed his letter to John Gabras but Akindynos left us in ignorance as to the first name of the Gabras who befriended him. Historians, therefore, have attempted to identify the anti-Palamite Gabras with either John Gabras or his brother Michael, two literary figures of the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁷ However, a letter of Akindynos to an unidentified supporter proves beyond doubt that a John Gabras was the man who corresponded with both leaders of the opposing factions. For in this letter Akindynos writes that his friend Gabras reported to him a conversation which the addressee had with Palamas when he visited the latter in the monastery where he was held in confinement.¹⁸ Since this particular visit and the ensuing discussion form the topic of Palamas' letter to John Gabras, there can be no doubt that the same individual communicated with both adversaries.¹⁹

Described by his correspondents as a man of superior intelligence and moral stature, John Gabras was obviously courted by both parties.²⁰ After Palamas' unsuccessful attempt to draw him to his side,

¹⁵See D. Tsames, 'Ιωσήφ Καλοθέτου Συγγράμματα, Θεσσαλονικεῖς Βυζαντινοὶ Συγγραφεῖς, I (Thessalonica, 1980), 348, where, on the basis of this identification, the author asserts that after 1342 Sabbas refused to support Palamas.

¹⁶Palamas, Τῷ σοφωτάτῳ καὶ λογιωτάτῳ καὶ ἐμοὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ ποθεινοτάτῳ Ἰωάννῃ τῷ Γαβρᾷ, Συγγράμματα, vol. 2, 325–62. Akindynos, Τῷ Γαβρᾷ (Letters 3 and 32), ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*, 99–100 and 114–16.

¹⁷For a list of the various scholars who have opted for John Gabras, author of a discourse on the Presentation of the Virgin (ed. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, 3 [Paris, 1832], 71–111), see S. Kouroules, Μανουὴλ Γαβαλᾶς εἴτα Ματθαῖος μητροπολίτης Ἐφέσου (1271/2–1355/60) (Athens, 1972), 44 note 5. For the opposite view, see Tsames, *op. cit.*, 64–66, who identifies the correspondent of Akindynos with Michael Gabras the author of several discourses and a voluminous correspondence published by G. Fatouros, *Die Briefe des Michael Gabras (ca. 1290–nach 1350)*, WBzSt, 101–2 (Vienna, 1973). On the Gabras family–Pontian landowners known from the second half of the tenth century—see A. Bryer, "A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, ca. 979–ca. 1653," *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 12,2 (1970), 164–87; and A. Bryer, S. Fassoulakis, D. M. Nicol, "A Byzantine Family: the Gabrades. An Additional Note," *Byzantinoslavica*, 36 (1975), 38–43; reprinted in Bryer, *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980), *Studies IIIa and IIIB*.

¹⁸Marc. 155, fols. 55^v–58^r (Letter 30).

¹⁹See Palamas, Letter to John Gabras (note 16 *supra*).

²⁰See *ibid.*, 362, and Akindynos, Letter to Gabras (Letter 32) ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*, 115^v–10^v.

Gabras published in 1343 an anti-Palamite tract which provoked the scorn of Palamas and elicited the enthusiastic applause of Akindynos.²¹ Thereafter, however, the name of Gabras disappears from Akindynos' correspondence, and the possibility that he might have converted to Palamism and assumed the monastic habit—a conjecture first proposed by Fr. Meyendorff²²—is supported, in my opinion, by the following evidence:

1. A careful reading of the pertinent passage in the *Vita* of Isidore by Philotheos, where the author relates that the Palamite monk Gabras predicted before 1347 the elevation of Isidore to the patriarchal throne, reveals that the first name of that clairvoyant monk was Ioannikios, the monastic equivalent of Ioannes (John).²³

2. The portrait that Philotheos paints of the monk Gabras as a man highly respected for his intellectual and moral excellence is consistent with what we know about John from the letters of Palamas and Akindynos.

It must also be noted that the name of John Gabras does not appear on the list of anti-Palamites, although this does not necessarily constitute evidence that he changed camps because this list is incomplete.²⁴

²¹This treatise has not survived; its refutation by Joseph Kalothetos has been edited by Tsames, *op. cit.*, 269–81. In his letters to Daniel of Ainos and to the *nomophylax* Symeon (Συγγράμματα, vol. 2, 375–94 and 395–410), Palamas also refuted Gabras' views. In the Letter to Daniel of Ainos, Palamas' invective is cryptically directed against a certain "ignorant theologian" who had received a letter from Akindynos in which the latter informed him that the leading class in the capital as well as the monks were in agreement with his views; see Συγγράμματα, vol. 2, 387^v–10: μεταπειθει γάρ με τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸν τοῦ Ἀκινδύνου γράμμα, δι' οὗ καὶ αὐτὸς ἰσχυρίζεται τοὺς τε ἐλλογιμωτέρους τῶν ἐνθάδε καὶ τοὺς ἡσυχία προσανέχοντας καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπλῶς πάντας συμφωνοῦντας ἔχειν. This statement is indeed found in the letter which Akindynos sent to Gabras to congratulate him for his anti-Palamite tract; see Letter to Gabras (Letter 32), ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*, 115; Ἡ δὲ θειοτάτη βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν . . . τοσοῦτον ἐνδείκνυμένη κράτος κατὰ τῆς δυσσεβείας ταύτης, πῶς δοκεῖς ἦσθαι καὶ τοῖς ταύτην σοῖς ἀνατρέπουσι λόγοις; τί δ' ἂν εἴποι τις περὶ τοῦ τῶν ἄλλων κύκλου θεῶν τε ἀρχιερέων, θεοφιλῶν τε ἀρχόντων, καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς ὅσοι τε κοινῶς καὶ ὅσοι μοναδικῶς βιοῦσιν. . . . This evidence leaves no doubt that the "ignorant theologian" attacked by Palamas was indeed John Gabras, as Chrestou correctly guessed in his introduction to the edition of Palamas' letters; see Συγγράμματα, vol. 2, 288–89.

²²Introduction (note 8 *supra*), 358. Kouroules also speculated that the three Gabrades involved in the controversy might have been the same person; *op. cit.* (note 15 *supra*), 44. The possibility that both opponents were addressing the same man was, likewise, suggested by Karpozilos who noted that the portrait of Gabras painted by Akindynos did not differ from Palamas' description of John Gabras; see *Letters*, 117.

²³*Vita Isidori*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, in *Zapiski . . .* (note 14 *supra*), 107–8.

²⁴See G. Mercati, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia*

As for the relationship of John Gabras to the contemporary scholar Michael, it remains unknown. As S. Kourouses has convincingly shown, Michael's brother John died in 1319, long before the Hesychast controversy, and cannot therefore be associated with that dispute.²⁵

TOWARD THE BIOGRAPHY OF AKINDYNOS

In conclusion, a word about Akindynos himself. According to the testimony of his adversaries—and they are the only source of specific information that we possess about his origins, education, and early activities—Akindynos was of Bulgarian (Moesian) ancestry and came from the vicinity of present-day Prilep in southern Yugoslavia.²⁶ His real name is unknown. Palamas informs us that Gregory was his monastic name and Akindynos the name he adopted for reasons of prestige.²⁷ Equally unknown is the date of his birth. But whatever his background, he succeeded in acquiring a good education in Thessalonica,²⁸ as shown by his correspondence which attests not only to his rhetorical training and familiarity with classical literature, but also to his association with a select coterie of Byzantine intellectuals. Though a complete evaluation of the man must await the publication of his theological works, the little that his letters reveal of him as an individual shows a rather appealing personality who fought stubbornly for his convictions.

In the dispute between his two friends he acted as a concerned and judicious mediator. With astuteness he warned Barlaam of the serious risks of a conflict with the highly respected Palamas and his powerful monastic following.²⁹ Yet he did not

hesitate to defy them himself soon afterward when he became convinced of what he called Palamas' "innovations" (καινοφωνία), borrowing the term from St. Paul and making the Apostle's injunction to resist doctrinal innovations the justification of his fight against his former spiritual father.³⁰ This dogmatic dispute became an obsession with him, absorbing his thoughts and energy to the exclusion of all other considerations.

In his letters he shows little interest in the political aspects of the conflict, alluding briefly and incidentally to the politics of his adversaries only in two instances: once when he expressed the hope that the "legitimate emperor" (sc. John V) will punish the Palamites for having chosen "a new emperor just as they chose a new God," and another time when he relates that the Palamite monk Mark Kyrtois was expelled from Thessalonica for his disloyalty to "both the divine and the imperial authority."³¹ Nor does the concern of contemporary Byzantine intellectuals for the Turkish threat or the decline of the Empire figure in his correspondence.³² Only toward the end did he associate his opponent's victory with such ominous events as the devastating earthquakes, the Turkish incursions, and the collapse of the dome of St. Sophia.³³

Unlike later anti-Palamites, he was not a Latin sympathizer. In writing to Lapithes about Barlaam, he counted the Calabrian humanist's conversion to Catholicism among his offenses while, on the other hand, in a letter to Gregoras he vehemently protested the imputation that Lapithes was a Latinophile; instead, he accused Palamas of being in touch with the Genoese at Galata and sending his works to the Master of the Hospitallers in Rhodes.³⁴ Furthermore, though he was familiar with

e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV, ST, 56 (Vatican City, 1931), 222–23.

²⁵ *Op. cit.* (note 15 *supra*), 43–44.

²⁶ See, for example, Palamas' Refutation of the Patriarch of Antioch, *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 2, 633^{11–14}; Letter to Gabras, *ibid.*, 348^{25–32}; Letter to Philotheos, *ibid.*, 523³.

²⁷ *Antirrhetic* 3, 23, 106, in *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 3, 238^{23–31}.

²⁸ A student of the Thessalonian philologist Thomas Magistros, Akindynos became himself a teacher of grammar; see his Letter to Magistros (Letter 56), ed. Loenertz, *Epistulae*, 97^{63–64}; and Philotheos, *Encomion*, PG, 155, cols. 650D–651A. On the eve of the controversy Akindynos had risen from humble beginnings to a position of certain influence at the Patriarchate, as indicated by his effective intervention in favor of Palamas during the preliminaries of the council of June 1341; see his Report to the Patriarch, ed. Uspenskij, *Sinodikh* (note 3 *supra*), 86–87. It is impossible, however, to determine how and why he was able to exercise such influence.

²⁹ See, for example, his Letter to Barlaam (Letter 9), *Scor. Φ. III-11*, fols. 231^v–231^r: Εἰ μὲν οὖν οὐ δοκεῖ σοι, τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων καὶ κατεσκευασμένων, πάντας σχεδὸν ἐκείνῳ κατὰ σοῦ συστήσεσθαι καὶ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ σοφοῦς—ὥσπερ οὖν οὐ δοκεῖ—οὐ καλῶς, οἶμαι, τοῦτό γε οὐδ' ἀληθῶς σοι δοκεῖ. διατί; ὅτι σὺ μὲν ἤρξας πολέμου τοῦ κατὰ τῶν σπουδαίων, ὁ δὲ σοι μὲν ἀντιλέγειν, τοῖς δὲ ἀμύνειν προθυμηθεῖς, οὐ παροπτέος αὐτοῖς.

³⁰ His favorite quotations from St. Paul are 2 Tim. 2:16–17 (Τὰς βεβήλους καινοφωνίας περιῖστασθαι . . .) and Gal. 1:8–9 (Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐὰν ἡμεῖς ἢ ἄγγελος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ εὐαγγελισθῶμεν ὑμῖν παρ' οὗ εὐηγγελισάμεθα, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω).

³¹ See Letter to the Patriarch (Letter 38), *Marc. 155*, fol. 50^v (Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ δίκαιος καὶ ἀληθινὸς βασιλεὺς, ὃν ἠθέλησαν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς βασιλεῦν [cf. Luc. 19:14], ἄλλην ἑαυτοῖς ἀντ' αὐτοῦ βασιλείαν ἐλόμενοι, μέτεισι τῆς ἀπειθείας ταύτης αὐτοῦς καὶ σκαιότητος; Letter to the Patriarch (Letter 37), ed. Uspenskij, *Sinodikh* (note 3 *supra*), 81; ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*, 110^{29–31} (Οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ Μάρκος μὲν διαφυγὼν τὰς Θεσσαλονικέων χεῖρας, ἐπεὶ καὶ περὶ τὸ θεῖον καὶ τὸ βασιλεῖον κράτος δυσσεβῆς ὢν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐφάνη καὶ ἄπιστος . . .).

³² For the attitude of other Byzantine men of letters toward the various signs of the Empire's impending collapse, see I. Ševčenko, "The Decline of Byzantium as Seen through the Eyes of Its Intellectuals," *DOP*, 15 (1961), 169–86; reprinted in Ševčenko, *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium* (London, 1981), Study II.

³³ See Letter to an Undecided (Letter 66), ed. Karpozilos, *Letters*, 87³⁵–88⁴⁰.

³⁴ See Letter to Lapithes (note 11 *supra*) and Letter to Gregoras, ed. Tsolakes (note 3 *supra*), 89^{63–65}.

Greek philosophy and was accused by his enemies of having succumbed to its profane influence, he regarded it in the truly Byzantine tradition as ancillary to theology and inferior to the revealed wisdom of God.³⁵

He was intransigent about what he believed to be the truth, but he was not cut of the stuff of martyrs. Twice he gave in under pressure and signed agreements of submission which he immediately retracted when allowed to escape. Palamas accused him of fickleness and ironically styled him a "chameleon."³⁶ But it seems that it was fear of punishment rather than instability which forced him to compromise on those occasions and finally to go into hiding instead of standing trial before a hostile synod.³⁷ His tragedy lay in his involvement by

accident in the dispute of two prominent men of superior intellect who happened to be his friends. This, in conjunction with the vicissitudes of the political situation and the schemes of a politically ambitious patriarch, thrust him in the foreground of a major doctrinal controversy in which he expressed the conservative, intellectual approach to theology of his fellow-literati. From their ranks came the majority of his correspondents and the men he admired the most, scholars like Thomas Magistros, Gregoras, Harmenopoulos, John Gabras, Maximus Kalopheros, and Lapithes. With the exception of the latter, they either treated him with indifference or eventually abandoned him. His successors in the fight against Palamism, among whom were such distinguished representatives of Byzantine scholarship as Gregoras and the Kydones brothers, disassociated themselves from a condemned heretic like him, and his memory faded soon after his death.³⁸ Nevertheless, his role as a moving force in a major dogmatic dispute which gave a fresh impetus to Eastern spirituality assures him of a place in Byzantine history.

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³⁵ See Letter to a Follower (Letter 19), *Marc. 155*, fol. 40^v: . . . προσέγγονε δὲ ἀρτίως καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν θειοτάτων δογμάτων ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ τῆς ἀσφαλοῦς θεολογίας θαῦμα· ἦν οὖσαν καρπὸν τῆς ὅλης φιλοσοφίας τὸν ἀνωτάτω εἰκότως ἐδρέψω, τὸ τέλος ἡδὲ τῶν ἐπ' ἐκείνῃ πόνων καὶ ἧς ἔνευ οὐκ ἔστιν ὄνησις φιλοσοφίας, οὐδὲ μὴν ὅλως φιλοσοφίας πρᾶγμα, εἰ καὶ τινες ἄλλως ὀνόματι φιλοσοφίας σεμνύνονται.

³⁶ See his Ἀναίρεσις γράμματος Ἰγνατίου, in *Συγγράμματα*, vol. 2, 633²². In addition to the statement signed after his ordination, Akindynos had signed an agreement with Palamas shortly before the synod of July 1341; see "Le tome syndal de 1347," ed. Meyendorff, *ZRVI*, 8 (1963), 226.

³⁷ Akindynos repeatedly spoke of the murderous designs of his enemies; see Report to the Patriarch, ed. Uspenskij, *Sinodikh* (note 3 *supra*), 89; Letter to Lapithes (Letter 42), *Marc. 155*, fol. 53^v (Καὶ ἀκινάκαι εἰλκύνθησαν, καὶ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἐρρῶη κατὰ τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐδάφους); Letter to the Patriarch (Letter 63), *Marc. 155*, fol. 41^v (Ἡ γὰρ οὐ λέων καὶ θηριώδης φύσις Μηνᾶς ὁ γειτονεύων μοι; ὃς . . . πρῶτον μὲν ξίφει με ἀνελεῖν ἐπεχείρησεν, εὐπορῶν τυραννίδος ἧς ἠθέλεν· ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτῷ τοῦτο οὐκ εἰς πέρας ἐλήλυθεν ἄκοντι . . . οὐ παύεται πάντα κινῶν ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ

κακουργῶν ἐπ' ἐμοί); Farewell Address to His Followers, *Marc. 155*, fol. 17^v (Διὰ ταῦτα διώκομαι καὶ θηρεύομαι θηριωδέστατα· πωλοῦσί μου τὴν ἄλωσιν οὐκ ὀλίγων οἱ θηρευταὶ τοῖς ὠνουμένοις ἀσμένως ἐπὶ τῷ διασπᾶσθαι).

³⁸ Akindynos died in the early spring of 1348; see Meyendorff, *Introduction*, 132 note 22. As Meyendorff points out (*ibid.*, 133 note 23), even the anti-Palamite tome of 1347 (PG, 150, cols. 877D-885A) does not mention his name.